

Understanding Details Pre-test

Name: _____

Read the story and answer the questions that follow.

Ramon and his little brother couldn't believe their ears when their mother came home with the good news. She had won a sales contest within her company and the prize was a week's stay at one of those fancy ski resorts in Colorado. When their father arrived home from work later that evening, he was flabbergasted that the prize allowed her to take the entire family.

The only negative about the whole thing was that none of them had ever seen snow, let alone been skiing. Living in southern California their whole lives, they had no experience with winter-related sports. Ben hesitated before bringing up this less-than-trivial detail, for fear of putting a damper on the exciting news. His mom looked at him as the thought was running through his mind.

She smiled. "I know that none of us know how to ski, but my friend at work who's been to this lodge assured me that you can take lessons. She said that her whole family was skiing before the end of their first day!" Ramon and Ben looked at each other, skeptical.

Their father quickly reminded them that there were many things to do at a ski resort besides skiing. "We can go sledding, ride snowmobiles, and go ice skating," he said excitedly.

Ramon felt pretty confident that he would be able to learn to ski quickly; after all, he was an expert water skier. His little brother, Ben, wasn't as confident. He remembered that his success with water skiing had been like a fish mastering a bicycle. Then he remembered what his dad had said about all of the other things they could do there.

A week later they boarded the plane ready to embark on their vacation. During the flight, Ramon avidly read the new skiing magazine that he had purchased at the airport newsstand.

Excitedly, he kept elbowing his brother. "Look at some of these cool stunts you can do on skis, Ben!"

His younger brother looked apprehensively at the picture of the skier completing a front flip. "I don't know, Ramon," he said slowly. "I think I'd rather rent snow mobiles."

His brother was shocked. "Look, you little coward," he said unsympathetically, "you aren't going to ruin this trip for all of us. If you don't ski, then someone will have to stay back with you!" Ben looked up at his brother dejectedly but said nothing.

When they arrived at the lodge, they were all in awe of the view from the top of the mountain. Before they had even checked into their rooms, Ramon was bugging his parents about taking their first ski lesson. Within an hour, the family had donned ski suits, boots, caps, and gloves. Ramon was obviously excited as he raced ahead of the family to the lesson area. While Ben was less than confident about skiing, he didn't want to disappoint his parents. He strapped on his skis along with the rest of his family. The instructor went through the basics including how to use the poles and how to come to a stop. At the end of the lesson, Ramon dragged Ben along with him to get in line for the ski lift that would take them to the top of the mountain. While they hadn't had experience skiing downhill during the lesson, Ramon still felt confident that it wouldn't be that difficult. After all, he knew how to turn, stop, and it wasn't very difficult to walk with the skis on.

Ben whispered to his brother as they boarded the lift, "Ramon, let's go on the bunny hill first."

His older brother looked at him with disgust. "What, are you kidding? That hill's for wimps! I want to try that blue slope."

Ben gulped. He knew that the blue slope was for more experienced skiers. Not wanting his sibling to further insult him, Ben sat back quietly. When they got to the top they both slid off the chair lift onto the snow-covered ground.

Ramon dragged his brother over to the beginning of the ski run. Ben peered anxiously down the alpine mountain. It was a rat's maze! People darted in and out, around trees and other skiers.

Before he realized it, Ramon had yanked him up to the edge. "We're next," his brother exclaimed

excitedly.

At that moment, Ramon gave Ben a gentle push to start him down the mountain. Ben looked around and realized that he was actually skiing. It reminded him of the first time he rode a bike, when he turned around and realized that his mother was no longer holding on to the back of the seat!

"Hey! Ramon," Ben screamed excitedly, "look at me, I'm doing it!"

Ben looked back over his shoulder when he realized that Ramon wasn't next to him. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Ramon wobbling on his skis, grabbing tree branches for balance. Needing to concentrate on his own progress, he quickly turned back to the trail ahead of him. By the time he made it to the bottom, he had decided that skiing was his new favorite sport. He smiled to himself as he scanned the mountainside looking for Ramon. After a minute, he spotted him. Ramon looked like he was doing cartwheels down the mountain! By the time he got to the bottom, he had lost his hat, one ski, a boot, and his goggles. While Ben found great humor in the situation, he was wise enough to avoid commenting.

"Okay, okay," Ramon said when he had regained his composure, "next time we go down the bunny hill!"

"No way!" Ben exclaimed excitedly. "I'm going down the black diamond next! This skiing stuff's a breeze!" Ramon groaned as he began searching for his missing boot.

- _____1. How did Ben feel about skiing prior to the trip?
 - A. He lacked confidence.
 - B. He was over-confident.
 - C. He was excited about learning how to ski.
 - D. none of the above

- _____2. What is the setting at the beginning of the story?
 - A. the mountains
 - B. Colorado
 - C. northern California
 - D. southern California

- _____3. Why did Ramon feel confident that he would be a good snow skier?
 - A. He was an excellent athlete.
 - B. He loved cold weather.
 - C. He was a good water skier.
 - D. The story did not say.

- _____4. At the end of the story, the setting of the story is _____.
 - A. southern California
 - B. an airplane
 - C. Colorado
 - D. The story did not say.

- _____ 5. Prior to the trip, how did Ramon feel about skiing?
- A. He was over-confident.
 - B. He lacked confidence.
 - C. He was apathetic.
 - D. He possessed just the right amount of confidence.
- _____ 6. Which of the following is not true?
- A. Ramon's mother had won a sales contest.
 - B. Ben lacked confidence about his skiing ability.
 - C. Ben turned out to be a better skier than Ramon.
 - D. All of the statements above are true.

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Hummingbirds are fascinating, unique creatures. To begin with, hummingbirds have the distinction of being the world's smallest birds. The smallest is the bee hummingbird of Cuba. It measures about two inches in length; half of that is just its tail and beak. These birds weigh less than one-fifteenth of an ounce, or two grams. The largest hummingbird, the giant hummingbird of South America, can exceed eight inches in length. Many people are surprised to learn that there are over 300 species of these small birds, making up one of the largest families of birds. The first hummingbirds lived in South America. Their territory has expanded to all parts of North America, Central America, and South America. These diverse creatures can adapt to a variety of environments including plains, deserts, mountains, and tropical rain forests. In the United States, hummingbirds can be found wherever flowers grow.

The hummingbird's tiny body is full of surprises. More than a third of its weight is in its chest muscles, the largest muscles in a hummingbird's body. Thanks to these muscles and an unusual wing design, the hummingbird is the best flier, and can perform tricks in the air that can be accomplished by no other species of bird. While most birds have small muscles that enable them to raise, not lower their wings, a hummingbird can raise and lower its wings, allowing it to get flying power from both wing beats. Also, the hummingbird can turn its wings in any direction. This enables it to fly forward, backward, sideways, and even upside down.

Another interesting feature of the hummingbird is its colorful feathers. As a hummingbird speeds through the air, the feathers on its head and throat change color. What appears gray one minute might look bright green the next. If you closely examined a hummingbird's feather, you would observe that parts of it are covered by thousands of minute "bubbles" of differing shape and thickness. When light bounces off the feathers at different angles, they appear as different colors. In a similar way, if you blow soap bubbles into the air and watch as they float, you will notice that their colors seem to change.

Despite its size, the hummingbird is a voracious eater. It must constantly eat to energize and heat its fast-moving body. Because its food must be digested quickly, it eats great quantities of sugar. Sugar can be digested and quickly turned into fuel. A hummingbird obtains most of its sugar from the nectar contained in flowers, but it is not uncommon for it to supplement its diet with fruit as well. Because it requires protein to build muscles, it also feasts on insects.

After examining many of the hummingbird's features, it is easy to see why people find these birds fascinating. Some find these birds interesting simply because of their intriguing flight patterns, while others are amazed by their petite size and boundless energy. It cannot be denied that the hummingbird is one of the most unique species of birds.

- ____ 7. Why do hummingbirds eat insects?
- A. Hummingbirds don't eat insects.
 - B. Insects are a source of sugar.
 - C. Insects are a source of protein.
 - D. Insects aid in sleeping.
- ____ 8. In the passage, what were the colors in a hummingbird's feathers compared to?
- A. a rainbow
 - B. soap bubbles that are blown into the air
 - C. a peacock's feathers
 - D. They aren't compared to anything.
- ____ 9. How large can a hummingbird grow?
- A. over eight inches
 - B. eight inches
 - C. less than eight inches
 - D. eight to twelve inches
- ____ 10. What is the function of the hummingbird's large chest muscles?
- A. They allow hummingbirds to lower as well as raise their wings.
 - B. They allow hummingbirds to perform tricks.
 - C. They make hummingbirds the best fliers.
 - D. All of the above
- ____ 11. Where can the smallest hummingbird be found?
- A. North America
 - B. Central America
 - C. Cuba
 - D. South America
- ____ 12. How does a hummingbird get enough energy to heat its body?
- A. It drinks a lot.
 - B. It eats a lot.
 - C. It has to stop and rest often.
 - D. It shares food supplies with other hummingbirds.
- ____ 13. According to the story, what can people do to help protect the hummingbird?
- A. Stop tearing down trees.
 - B. Hang hummingbird feeders in their yards.
 - C. Plant more flower gardens that will attract the birds.
 - D. The passage does not say.

Read the story and answer the questions that follow.

The oxygen-mask clad inspectors seen in local schools this week were not on a routine safety check as they first indicated. This special unit of hazardous substance investigators had a mission of the utmost importance in the lives of our students.

A routine repair by the Crescent Leaf School District's Mobile Repair Unit at Ash Street High School turned into a near disaster last month as workers pulled out old ceiling tiles only to discover that the sprayed on insulation in the ceiling contained asbestos. People in the affected classrooms were immediately relocated. Nearly 100 students, teachers, and staff were exposed to the asbestos before it was discovered.

The day following the asbestos exposure incident, a district spokesperson announced that a special team of investigators would be dispatched to all schools in the district to investigate the asbestos problem.

Asbestos is the common name for a group of naturally occurring minerals. These minerals have properties that make them excellent for insulation. Unfortunately, some of these same properties make them potentially harmful to people. The individual fibers are smaller than a human hair and will remain suspended in the air for hours. The fibers are easily inhaled but are nearly indestructible once inside the body. With enough exposure these tiny fibers can cause cancerous and noncancerous respiratory diseases. Children are the most susceptible to these diseases, and each exposure increases the risk of health problems.

State Health Department official Mr. Art Beltway commented that the real danger was only in the buildings where the ceiling tiles had been disturbed. "The asbestos in the ceiling that has not been disturbed does not pose a threat. Only fibers that have been released into the air are potentially harmful." When questioned about what Crescent Leaf Schools should do regarding the asbestos discovered in their schools, Mr. Beltway suggested, "Eliminating the asbestos in the classrooms where the ceiling has been disturbed should be all that is done during the school year. If the district decides to undertake the costly task of eliminating asbestos, the schools should be closed until the work is complete."

Students at Ash Street High School have been relocated to other area schools until the asbestos is sufficiently cleaned up in their school.

District officials are still undecided about what course of long-term action they will take. The results of their investigation will be finalized next week, and the school board plans to discuss the issue at its January meeting.

- _____ 14. What is the course of action suggested by the State Health Department for the Crescent Leaf School District?
- A. Eliminate asbestos in the school where the ceiling has been disturbed.
 - B. Close all the schools and immediately eliminate asbestos in all the schools in the district.
 - C. Eliminate asbestos in the classrooms where the ceiling tiles have been disturbed.
 - D. Immediately eliminate asbestos in all schools without regard to cost.
- _____ 15. Which asbestos fibers are harmful?
- A. those that are naturally occurring
 - B. those that are in the ceiling
 - C. those that have been released in the air
 - D. those that have been chemically altered

- _____16. Which of the following statements is true?
- A. Asbestos fibers are slightly larger than a human hair and will remain suspended in the air for hours.
 - B. Individual asbestos fibers will remain in the air for hours.
 - C. Asbestos fibers are difficult to inhale, but once inside the body they are difficult to destroy.
 - D. One minor exposure to asbestos can cause children to have cancerous and noncancerous respiratory diseases.
- _____17. Who discovered the asbestos at Ash Street High School?
- A. Mr. Art Beltway
 - B. 100 teachers, students, and staff
 - C. the oxygen-mask clad inspectors
 - D. members of the Mobile Repair Unit
- _____18. How many schools in the Crescent Leaf School District have asbestos insulation?
- A. just Ash Street High School
 - B. every school in the district
 - C. just a few schools in the district
 - D. information not provided
- _____19. When does the asbestos in the ceiling pose a health threat?
- A. when it is in the building
 - B. when it has been disturbed
 - C. when it is in the ceiling
 - D. information not provided
- _____20. What was the Mobile Repair Unit repairing when the asbestos was discovered?
- A. ceiling tiles
 - B. asbestos insulation
 - C. the roof
 - D. information not provided